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# *The Opened Shutters*

*Story by Clara Louise Burnham*

*Scenes by Boris Schroeder*

*Directed by Mrs. Northington* ✓

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## THE STORY

Sylvia Lacey is the daughter of Sam Lacey, a dabbler in art, making a precarious living. Sylvia has inherited his artistic tendencies. Almost her only friend is Nat, who does a juggling act on the small time, and wishes to marry her.

Sam Lacey came of straight-laced New England stock. Sam's sister is Martha Lacey, a prim-lipped old maid. Sam's wife was the sister of old Judge Calvin Trent, an equally hardened bachelor. Curiously enough, Sam and Martha were once engaged to be married. That was twenty-five years ago. She turned him down. "If I had married him," says Martha to herself. "Thank God, she didn't marry me!" the judge congratulates himself.

Judge Trent and Martha are jarred by the news that Sam has died and that his daughter is on the way East to live with Martha.

So Sylvia waits for the uncle whose picture she had been taught to kiss each night, and the aunt, who, she pictures, must be a kindly, motherly woman. But instead, as she waits, she overhears a spare, vinegary

woman and a young man indicate that her arrival is most unwelcome. And then they begin talking of her father, and how he had mistreated her mother.

"It's a lie!" she cries, and leaps up to face them. She tells them to go.

Sylvia flees to her room, refusing to have anything to do with either of them. But outside the hotel John Dunham remembers an errand, leaves Miss Lacey and goes to the girl's

room, where he finds her in despair.

When Martha and John face Judge Trent there ensues an uncomfortable half-hour. Sylvia is sent to Jacob Johnson, known as "Thinkright," through his favorite saying that right thinking would make anything come out right.

Sylvia finds herself at the Tide Mill farm, bitter in heart against her relatives, rather reluctant even to accept the hospitality of "Thinkright" despite his kindness and the persuasiveness of his precepts. It is called the Tide Mill Farm because just at the edge of the little harbor stands an old tide mill with close shuttered windows, which seems to typify the hearts of those to whom Sylvia has gone so trustfully—close shuttered against love and light.

Sylvia has fallen in love with John,

but believes he and Edna, a wealthy summer visitor, are sweethearts.

That night Sylvia goes out on the lake in a tiny skiff in a vain attempt to forget her sorrow at not winning John's love. A terrific storm comes up suddenly and Sylvia, at the mercy of the elements, loses her oars. A thunder-bolt strikes near the boat and, in her terror, Sylvia overturns the skiff.

John has missed Sylvia. The family make inquiries and learn she is out in the storm. John sets out to find her, but cannot trace her in the darkness. As he searches the shore in a frenzy a flash of lightning reveals the overturned boat with Sylvia desperately clinging to its keel.

John effects a heroic rescue and carries Sylvia back to the house. He suddenly realizes he cares for Sylvia and she confesses her love for him.

Sylvia finds that "Thinkright" has preached a true gospel—a new outlook on life which brings her love and happiness and throws wide the shutters which had kept in shadow the souls of those whose restricted lives gave little opportunity for light and joy to enter.

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